POLICY AND ORGANIZATION GROUP
Committee Triennial Strategic Plan (TSP)

Committee Name and Number: ABG40, Library and Information Science for Transportation

Committee Chair: Ken Winter, Virginia Department of Transportation (April 2009-April 2012)

TSP Three-Year Period: April 2012-April 2015

Date Prepared: March 2012

Committee Future Outlook Statement:
Current Committee Scope
This committee serves as a forum for transportation librarians and the transportation research community on developments in information science and their applicability to transportation. The committee facilitates diffusion of library and information science innovations throughout the transportation community by monitoring the use of new resources and tools in the transportation arena, defining critical research and training issues relating to their implementation, and promoting the benefits of these capabilities.

Factors and influences that will shape the committee’s activities
Access to the right information at the right time in the right format is vital to promoting advancements in transportation technology and improvements in policy. Information access is an issue with the potential to cut across all TRB committees. When properly applied, the principles of library and information science can save time, save money, reduce duplicated effort, speed implementation of research, and advance innovation.

Issues ABG40 Faces: The Landscape for Transportation Information Professionals
The top three cross-cutting issues the Committee on Library and Information Science for Transportation faces and which are within the scope of the committee over the short (1-3 years) and long-term (4-7 years) are Workforce Changes, Technology Development and Increased Interest In Data. These three cross-cutting issues and specific goals and proposed projects tied to those goals, can serve to focus the committee’s planned activities and may be addressed through liaison or collaborative efforts. Key collaborators could include other TRB committees (especially these committees within the Policy and Organization Group: History, Technology Transfer, Conduct of Research) and others in the group. Collaborative opportunities may exist with other groups as well (especially the Transportation Division of the Special Libraries Association and the Eastern, Midwestern and Western Transportation Knowledge Networks). The three key cross-cutting issues faced by ABG40 are reviewed as follows:

Workforce Changes
Workforce changes noted in TRB’s Critical Issues in Transportation are sweeping the sector.
There continues to be a decline of human and intellectual capital throughout transportation. Retirements, downsizing and outsourcing are changing the workforce and the “library user” demographic while a new generation of knowledge workers with higher expectations and less access to the institutional knowledge than their predecessors enters the workforce.

These professionals will be more connected, will have more computing power, will be more mobile, and will expect rapid, seamless access to information. They seem confident in their ability to use discovery tools but may not be aware of downstream barriers to information delivery, including: copyright restrictions, IT constraints (filtering software, policy restrictions, authentication, etc.), and licensing costs. They will value speed and convenience first, and will want online access to information previously accessible only in print. The best information, if not accessible, may be marginalized in favor of lower quality information that is more accessible. Without instruction or an awareness of quality issues, transportation professionals may not be able to differentiate “quality” information from “accessible” information.

Library professionals are being affected by workforce changes as well, and there is evidence that both library collections and staffing levels are undergoing negative changes. Heavier workloads, flat or reduced staffing levels and increased accountability for results may mean ABG40 volunteers have less time to spend on TRB activities, and that they need to see more immediate benefits from the time they invest in TRB activities to justify their ongoing involvement.

Technology Development
The nature of publishing and the library profession are undergoing radical changes as well. Successful information professionals have adapted to develop competencies in database design and use, metadata use and standards, online access/authentication, bibliographic instruction and instructional technology, negotiating licenses, digitization, accessibility and copyright issues, use of social media tools and skills related to information standards and technology. Many transportation libraries have not had access to the tools, competencies, resources and guidance needed to adapt to these changes, however. Cooperative cataloging and interlibrary lending efforts often have not always utilized established standards, known technologies or proven best practices, compared to other sectors such as medicine. Documents that are indexed or cataloged by transportation libraries tend to be accessible primarily through silos (online tools) that must be searched individually—something overburdened researchers and busy policy makers will be less inclined to do in the future than they have in the past. While technology exists for cross-database searching, few transportation libraries have found ways to integrate access to information silos (including the holdings of peer libraries) much less crosswalk searches to reveal alternative information such as: images, blog postings, videos and social media content.

Meanwhile, library collections are growing slowly and transportation librarians still spend an unusually large percentage of their budget and human resources on activities related to physical collections. Little progress has been made in identifying unique items in transportation library collections to prioritize them for retention, digitization or archiving. In short, too much time and energy is being spent on ubiquitous print materials that are easily accessible online, print copies of which saturate the transportation sector. Meanwhile, evidence indicates that
the advantages of content “ownership” are diminishing while the benefits of “access” to online content in an always-there-always-on world are increasing. State DOT research reports and similar documents are now born digital and are typically posted to agency Web sites. Indexing to them is routinely entered into TRID and OCLC’s WorldCat database of library holdings, and more frequently into the National Transportation Library’s integrated search tool, and that indexing includes links to online documents. But there remains no mechanism to ensure that those links won’t break if copies of reports are moved from agency servers. There remains no single location for these documents and no institutional or discipline specific repository for archiving state DOT research reports or other transportation research documents.

In addition, few transportation libraries have developed the capacity or guidelines for digitization initiatives, including those for their own agency’s reports, despite a clear preference for patron access to online digital content. Most do not have the capacity for retrospective digital conversion of older (2000 and earlier) documents.

**Increased Interest in Data**

Research from the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has shown that most researchers today start their research online, but do not start in a library catalog. They conclude that catalogs and other library systems need to look and function more like search engines (i.e., Google and Yahoo) and Web services (i.e., Amazon.com), since these are familiar to users who are comfortable and confident in using them. Due to these factors, high-quality metadata is becoming more important for discovery of appropriate resources. Meanwhile, improved desktop and handheld computing technology, enhancements in search technology, the rise of social media, and increased use of technologies that automate alerts and syndicate information in other ways have made it even easier for researchers to discover relevant new documents.

Not enough, however, has been done to make it easier for transportation knowledge workers to acquire documents once they discover they exist. While increased access to digital content of all kinds and in all formats is almost uniformly seen as better by library users, not enough infrastructure exists to adequately support the entire discovery-to-document-delivery process for core transportation research documents. Such core documents include: federal and state government agency reports, licensed content through transportation publishers (aside from TRB), current journals and journal backfiles, technical papers and standards and specifications. Some of those documents are produced with public funds, and the majority of those documents do not fall within the purview of TRB.

Transportation libraries have a long history of creating, preserving and providing access to bibliographic data, but on the horizon it seems likely they will be asked to help manage other kinds of data as well. The transportation sector seems keen on the notion of utilizing library and information professionals as part of the equation for effective data management or for managing non-bibliographic data and data sets. Do most transportation librarians have the tools, standards, background and competencies to move from information to data and from bibliographic data to other kinds of data?

**Other Issues ABG40 Faces Include:**
Image and Branding

In addition, the information profession is dealing with an outdated image. Transportation librarians have struggled to adapt in ways that advance the perceived relevancy of their brand in the Internet era. Libraries in general are still perceived as “collections of books” and librarians in general are still perceived as “people who love books.” While that image has value, it does not take into account the vast changes in technology that have occurred and accelerated in recent years. In reality library and information centers are increasingly being required to collect more formats of hard-copy (not just books) and vastly more digital content in formats of all types. Meanwhile, staff time, funding, shelf space and other resources will continue to be scarce for transportation libraries, which means that promoting coordination among transportation libraries for digital access and similar issues will remain a priority.

Competition for Volunteers

ABG40 was created in 1999 to help provide leadership for the transportation community in its efforts to gather, organize and disseminate information for the improvement of transportation systems. Legislation in 1998 created the National Transportation Library within U.S. DOT. NTL subsequently provided funding and support for the formation of the Midwest Transportation Knowledge Network (MTKN), a collection of 17 members from 8 Midwest states. In 2006, TRB Special Report 284 “Transportation Knowledge Networks: A Management Strategy for the 21st Century” was published, encouraging the formation of other TKNs nationwide. Subsequently, a Western TKN (17 members from 10 Western states) and an Eastern TKN (23 members in 14 Eastern states) formed in 2007. In 2009 a National TKN was formed by the NTL to help TKNs find ways to collaborate. Finally, in 2009 an AASHTO RAC TKN Task Force was formed with 15 members from all regions of the country, to serve as a forum to develop the concept, understanding, and application of TKNs in the transportation sector. In addition, the Transportation Division of the Special Libraries Association continues since its creation in 1948. Its membership includes most of the members of the previously mentioned TKNs and other groups.

All of these groups operate exclusively through the use of volunteer labor. While most of these groups have similar mission and vision statements (i.e. most include non-specific references to collaboration and coordination), they act autonomously, often engaging in repetitive and duplicative activities, including: conference calls, in-person meetings, special projects, drafting guidelines, creating group Web sites, conducting Webinars and developing marketing, promotion and position statements.

In addition, during this era there have been two major pay-to-play initiatives that have impacted the group of potential volunteers LIST has traditionally tapped for participation.

In 2005 FHWA approved TPF 5(105) a 5-year Pooled Fund Study titled “Transportation Library Connectivity.” According to the final report of this group, membership grew from 11 members in nine states to 25 members in 22 states by its conclusion in 2010. Participation required a funding commitment by members and governance of group activities entailed a commitment of member participation through regularly scheduled meetings and conference calls. According to the Transportation Pooled Fund Program Web site, financials for the solicitation show total
financial commitments received during the 5-year program as $1.32 million.

A second pooled fund study, “Transportation Library Connectivity and Development,” was initiated in 2011 with 24 members in 22 states. As of March 7, 2012 total commitments received stood at: $885,528.28 with a commitment ending date of 2015. This second phase study included many (but not all) participants from the previous study (as well as some new members), and was similar in scope and activities. It is utilizing the paid services of a full-time consultant, however, membership also entails a commitment of time by members.

Although the number of initiatives and the quantity of their activities has now grown to seven groups (including ABG40 but not including the Pooled Fund Study referenced above) the overall pool of volunteer participants has not grown significantly. Due to workforce changes described earlier, demands for greater accountability, and constraints on budgets and travel, one consequence has been competition for scarce volunteer time.

LIST needs to compare its mission and scope to those of the other initiatives, determine what it is in a unique position to accomplish, and find ways to collaborate with the other groups toward a clearly articulated vision for the future while keeping quality high and duplication low. LIST should consider ways to take advantage of volunteer activities that do not require travel or face-to-face attendance at meetings, including Webinars, Web-based promotional programs, collaboration through interactive Web tools, soliciting and facilitating original research and publication of that research, and working to publish that research, and shaping guidelines and best practices for transportation libraries. Since ABG40’s membership as a whole has high levels of professional talent, high levels of experience in research and education, high levels of educational attainment, and is capable of being impartial, it may be in a position to provide peer review and analysis of the works and activities of other groups to help clarify opportunities and priorities.

Committee Future Outlook and Goals
TRB’s Policy & Organizational Group has identified a number of critical cross-cutting issues that will require collaboration and action from an array of TRB committees in order to make meaningful advances in addressing these needs adequately. ABG40 provides leadership in efforts to better understand developments in information science and their applicability to transportation, and to utilize existing and emerging technologies and foster innovative practices in library science, and to encourage the use of known standards and best practices for the improvement of transportation systems. The committee does this by impartially monitoring the emergence of new transportation research resources, tools and collaborative relationships, defining critical research and training issues related to implementation, and promoting the benefits of these capabilities. The committee should consider the following goals for the short- (1-3 years) and for the long-term (4-7 years). Specific examples of Projects and Activities that tie in to the 7 goals articulated here are listed, though not in priority order.

Committee Goals:
1. **Promote increased access to international transportation research and information.**
Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:
a. More and better collaboration needs to happen between ABG40 and AOO10, TRB’s International Activities committee.

b. The committee should strive to maintain and extend the international demographic of its committee members.

c. The committee should also encourage and facilitate research that shows the specific benefits of international information sharing and collaboration.

d. When possible, committee members should seek participation in TRB projects and initiatives that are directly related to the international information component.

e. Reach out to transportation information centers, organizations and groups beyond TRB to develop new relationships with the global information community.

2. Identify best practices and critical issues regarding the use of metadata, metadata standards and to promote improved access to data and effective data management.
Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:

a. The committee should develop more direct liaising with other TRB committees that deal with data and metadata. We should be careful to develop relationships only with those groups with which we have similar definitions of data and metadata.

b. The committee should seek new committee members who have data expertise.

c. The committee should consider conducting a gap analysis of the tools or skill sets related to data and metadata that are present or missing in the world of transportation libraries, which would help library and information professionals prepare for a future where they deal with data more directly.

3. Advocate and promote effective information handling as a means to an improved business process in an era of constrained resources and increased accountability.
Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:

a. ABG40 is in a “position of credibility” to help explain and leverage the library brand and the value of libraries to stakeholders, and to provide library and information professionals from inside and outside ABG40 a mechanism for publishing research that shows the business and research value of library and information services. In recent years ABG40 has seen success in this regard through poster sessions, an e-Circular and articles in TR News. We should continue in that same vein.

b. The committee could advocate for ongoing research focused specifically on transportation libraries and information centers through white papers, especially those that deal with: case studies, lessons learned, best practices, technology transfer and other activities that advance the practice of library and information science in the transportation sector, especially in regard to improved business processes.
c. In addition to providing information professionals a platform for publication and presentation, ABG40 members could work with B0002 to help develop instructional Webinars or other instructional or promotional materials to support the use of TRID, RiP, RNS and other TRB online research tools, again focused on effective information handling and seeking as a part of the business process.

d. The committee should consider ways to advocate for, to research, and to publicize the results of research showing how effective information handling can lead to better business processes and more effective decision making. One topic ABG40 could help clarify (or advocate for research in) is the longstanding discussion of Return on Investment (ROI) for transportation libraries, or to examine how libraries contribute using more modern performance management tools, such as the “Balanced Scorecard” model of assessment.

e. Research on best practices for library metrics, inputs and most importantly, “outcomes” could also extend to other forms of program evaluation and performance. Specific case studies that quantify and qualify the impact of library services on decision making could also be explored.

4. Identify and strengthen institutional partnerships and alliances through collaboration.
Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:

a. Collaborate with the Transportation Division of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) on effective programming for professional development relevant to transportation libraries, and to avoid scheduling conflicts and duplicated effort in general.

b. Collaborate with USDOT through the National Transportation Library to promote research and to establish best practices for transportation libraries, and provide input and assistance to USDOT in defining the future of library and information science for transportation in addressing needs, as well as establishing a vision for local, state and federal roles. Collaboration should connect to promoting increased access to international research and information, information handling, institutional partnerships and alliances, and training needs to help users get more from NTL collections, services and initiatives.

c. Formalize collaboration with selected TRB committees – ABG40 members have collaborated with many other committees across the TRB committee structure in addressing cross-cutting issues. The committee should find ways to formalize our liaisonship with other TRB committees. Collaboration can be very resource intensive, so we should consider targeting specific committees to collaborate with, focusing first on the goals outlined here (For example, international, data, etc.). A complete list of committees with which the Committee on collaborates with is provided in Appendix A.

d. Seek sponsorship of joint sessions and research statements to identify critical issues and advance research relevant to stakeholders and users, and sponsor or co-sponsor sessions and workshops at annual meetings and mid-year meetings in collaboration with other TRB
committees for annual and mid-year meetings. The committee will provide liaisons with non-highway TRB committees and other groups, including the AASHTO RAC.

5. **Promote effective collaboration between library and information groups in their efforts to increase access to and availability of information stores by formalizing our collaboration with selected TRB committees and other groups.**

Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:

a. LIST members should find ways to participate in more TRB Webinars, workshops and meetings that discuss key research tools (such as TRID, RiP and RNS) and to point to the existence and value of transportation libraries and library networks.
   1. Coordinating with other TRB committees could effectively support goals 1-3.
   2. Coordinating with the Transportation Division of the Special Libraries Association, the National Transportation Library, and other agencies and organizations in conducting Webinars devoted to the theory, practical applications and new concepts in library and information science could support many of the committee’s goals.

b. Encourage research describing and evaluating the effectiveness of collaborative efforts between transportation libraries, including the publication of white papers or peer-reviewed papers, posters and presentations submitted to TRB, through the LIST committee. The research methodologies used for those papers (including survey instruments) could be coordinated and “vetted” with assistance from other TRB committees.

c. Future Annual Meeting programming should bear in mind the work of transportation library networks and groups like the SLA Transportation Division, and other collaborative efforts that increase capacity, reduce duplicate and create efficiencies within the community, including the opportunity for presentation.

6. **Help define research and training needs and inform and educate transportation professionals of new resources and tools and their effective use in transportation research.**

Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:

a. Explore ways to expand publishing of research related to transportation libraries and information centers and their activities, both through the TRB imprint and by providing editorial and other support to burgeoning authors (in and outside of the committee membership), through committee white papers published directly to the ABG40 Web site, and by supporting committee members who wish to publish in professional publications related to library science or related disciplines.

b. Consider looking outside the world of transportation to graduate and post graduate researchers in library and information science (and other disciplines) to connect researchers looking for projects to research topics ABG40 has prioritized.
c. Make full use of the newly appointed Committee Research Coordinator (CRC) and create a working group within the committee to assist the CRC with the committee’s research agenda as it relates to information. The working group and CRC will do the following:
   1. Draft research needs statements related to transportation information and data.
   3. Track the progress of past research initiatives from the committee.

7. Improve committee communication by creating and deploying a revised and enhanced committee Web page.
Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal:

   a. Redesign, enhance and repurpose the committee Web site for knowledge sharing, outreach, and promoting research tools and news about emerging techniques and best practices in transportation library science.

   b. Post minutes from meetings, the Committee Strategic Plan, committee organization details, presentations and papers from committee activities and sessions, and a schedule of pertinent events.

   c. Include an on-line method for interested people to register as committee “friends” and to comment on proposed activities. Use the committee Web site as an outreach mechanism, by highlighting the committee purpose and scope and inviting collaboration from interested parties.

   d. Explore innovative ways to use the committee Web site for special projects or as a collaborative workspace for subcommittees. This could also support goals 8 and 9.

8. Maintain and improve committee structure, activities and engagement, and manage membership through administrative and organizational changes.
Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal

   a. Strengthen and expand the role of ABG40 sub-committees and make other organizational changes that help distribute the work of the committee more evenly and that more fully engage the talents and energy of all committee members.

   c. Create new working groups as needed (including sub committees and task forces). These subcommittees should be prioritized according to the committee’s major goals.

   d. Maintain and expand committee representation by International members and Young members.

   e. Update membership to maintain balanced representation of both established and emerging applications of transportation librarianship and different points of view from different types of organizations (federal, state, research, academic, private sector, etc.) and of different transportation modes.
f. Ensure that membership reflects a balanced composition with regard to geography, gender, race, ethnicity, and organizational affiliation.

g. Expand membership to include more members with expertise in data and metadata.

9. Establish an editorial review group to support members (and non members) who want to contribute to the research through publication and presentation.

Potential Projects and Activities Tied To This Goal

a. Establish an editorial review group of some type. This group will serve as a forum for the thought leaders in transportation librarianship to education and stimulate to action decision makers on the latest strategic issues and solutions in library and information science for transportation. The group could provide the following functions:

1. Act as the editorial review mechanism for papers submitted to TRB that deal with topics germane to library and information science.
2. Provide editorial overview, guidelines and other support for ABG40 members interested in publishing original research within the scope of the committee.
3. Recommend topics of potential research that needs to be done, and encourage library and information professionals and other researchers (inside and outside of transportation) to publish on those topics and other challenges specific to the transportation sector. This would be coordinated with goal 6.
4. Encourage and support (through written guidelines) the creation of white papers (policy, position, and issue papers), which will be posted on the committee Web site. These papers can be used as advocacy tools to help key decision-makers and influencers justify implementing specific changes.
5. Develop best practice papers to help transportation librarians understand solutions to specific technical challenges and to assist in their development as information professionals.

b. In the next 2-5 years provide the editorial content for an “Information Edition” of TR News, highlighting the evolution of research tools (including TRID, RiP and RNS) emerging models of information dissemination (including RSS feeds, the TRB E-Newsletter, etc.) and best practices of transportation libraries and research centers. This was done successfully in 2009 and could also support goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Membership

- Maintain and expand committee representation by International members.
- Maintain and expand committee representation by “young” members.
- Update Committee and Subcommittee membership to maintain balanced representation of both established and emerging applications of transportation librarianship and different points of view from different types of organizations (federal, state, research, academic, private sector, etc.) and of different transportation modes.
- Ensure that Committee membership reflects a balanced composition with regard to geography, gender, race, ethnicity, and organizational affiliation.
- Expand membership to include more members with expertise in data and metadata.
**Proposed changes in scope**
No changes in the scope of the committee are recommended at this time.
Appendix A - Committee History

Committee website
http://trblist.org

Membership gender and racial diversity
That information will go here...

Geographic distribution of membership
That information will go here...

Professional affiliation distribution of membership
That information will go here...

Subcommittees and their chairs
  • Transportation Research Thesaurus Subcommittee ABG40(2)–Chair, Sandra Tucker, Texas A&M Universities

The purpose of the Transportation Research Thesaurus subcommittee is to review and accept or disapprove additions and revisions to the TRT that are proposed by the TRID indexers and by members of the transportation community.

Other committee relationships
AGB40 maintains formal and informal relationships with many different committees. Members of ABG40 maintain active involvement with the following committees:

  • A0001: International Activities
  • B0002: TRB Information Services Committee
  • ABG10: Conduct of Research
  • ABJ30: Urban Transportation Data and Information Systems
  • APO50: Bus Transit Systems
  • ABG30: Technology Transfer
  • ABG50: Transportation History
  • ABJ50: Information Systems and Technology

Our members also have been directly involved with the following Panels and Task Groups:

  • TF17: TCRP Project Panel on Developing Best-Practice Guidelines for Improving Bus Operator Health and Retention
  • D2090: NCHRP Project Panel on Improving Access to Transportation Information
  • NCHRP 2025-Task 77 Advisory Panel: Strategic Options of Inventorying and Updating Environmental Guidance and Links
  • TE07: TCRP Project Panel on Establishing a National Transit Industry Rail Vehicle Technician Certification Program: Building for Success
• TB38: TCRP Project Panel on Parking and Feeder/Circulator Access to Public Transportation
• TH45: TCRP Project Panel on Rail Transit Corridor Analysis: Planning and Retrofitting for Livable Communities
• TF16: TCRP Project Panel on the Public Transportation Industry's Professional Development/Human Capital Needs to Build a Sustainable Workforce
• TA15C: TCRP Project Panel on Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 3rd Edition

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